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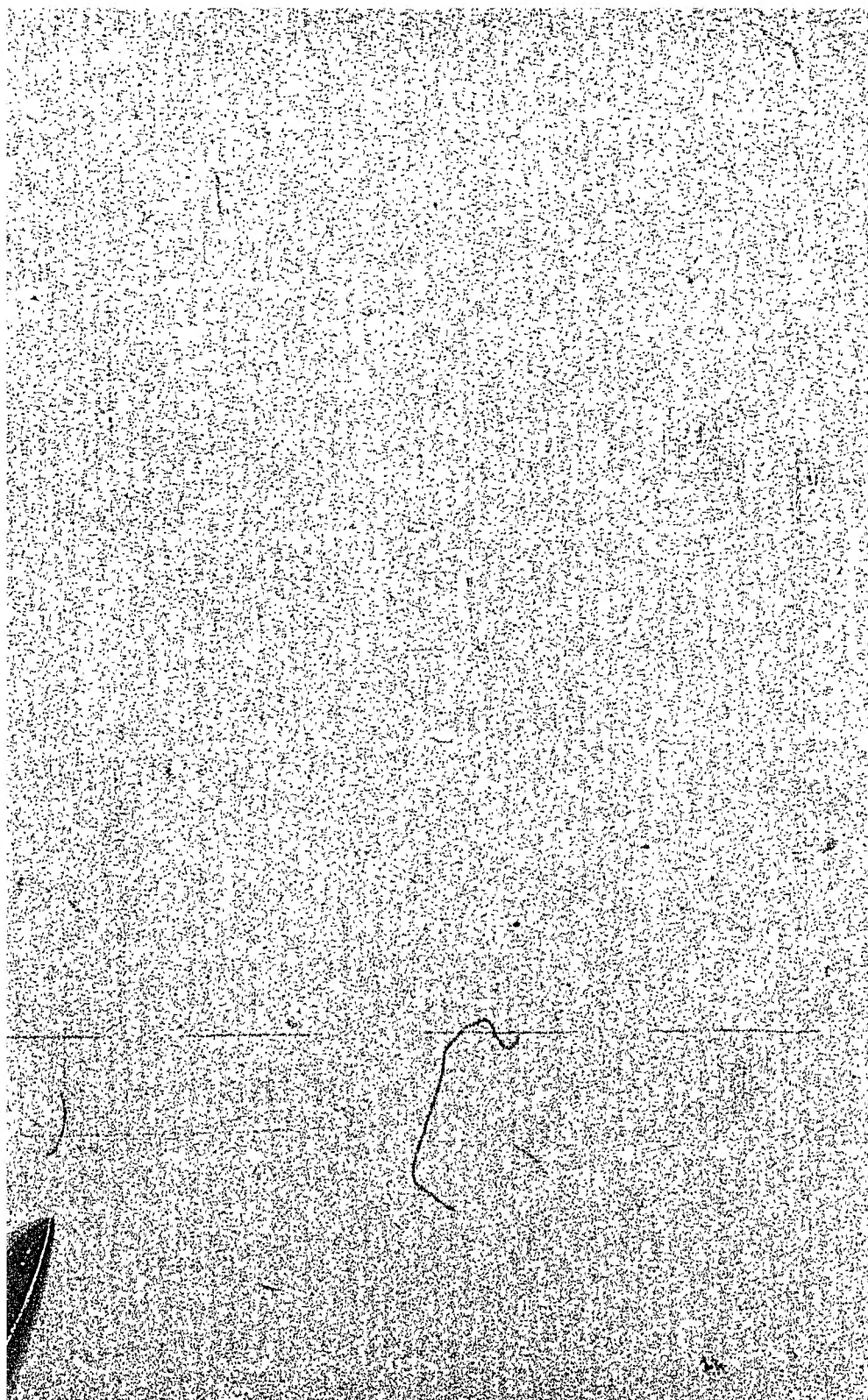
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TRUE AND SOUND POLICY
OF
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL.

OPEN LETTERS
TO
DALTON MCCARTHY, Esq. Q.C., M.P.,

BY
L. G. DESJARDINS,
LATE M.P. FOR LISLET.

QUEBEC
PRINTED AT THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" OFFICE
1893.



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LIBRAIRIE
G. DUCHARME
245, rue Fullum
Montréal

MR. DESJARDINS'S LETTERS.

(From the *Quebec Morning Chronicle*, May 20th, 1893.)

Mr. L. G. Desjardins, who has been doing such noble work, of late, for his fellow-countrymen, brings to-day, his notable series of open letters to Mr. Dalton McCarthy to a close. These letters, couched in firm, but gentlemanly language, have attracted great attention throughout the country. The *Montreal Gazette* and the *Toronto Empire* have done us the honor to republish this valuable correspondence. And from many a private source, we have received warm words of praise about the letters and the author. Indeed, we are but repeating the views of more than a score of attentive readers of the series, when we say that we have been asked to republish in pamphlet form, this notable and instructive contribution to the political and social history of the Dominion. We hope that Mr. Desjardins will give his consent, and allow a *brochure* to be made of his exhaustive study of French-Canada in Canadian politics. Such a work, brief as it is, would prove a valuable addition to our literature.

Thus far, three letters have appeared. The fourth and last of the set, we publish in our columns, to-day. Like its predecessors it is characterized by breadth of view and loftiness of purpose. Mr. McCarthy was, in the old days, a devoted follower of Sir John Macdonald. He had an abiding faith in the statesmanship of his old leader. He and Mr. Desjardins were fighting, for years, on the same side of politics. Something occurred to estrange Mr. McCarthy. But Mr. Desjardins remained true to his early convictions, and refused to change his politics at the bidding of any one. He is naturally shocked at Mr. McCarthy's course, but, though he is severe on him, he has more pity and sorrow in his heart than malice. His open letters are pleas, asking the prodigal to return to the fold. Mr. Desjardins does not need to be a prophet to foretell the result of Mr. McCarthy's crusade. Neither side will accept the erratic member for North Simcoe, able and brilliant as he undoubtedly is. His hostility to the French and the Roman Catholic Religion will prevent Mr. Laurier from asking him to join his band. The Conservatives cannot afford to take him up, knowing as they do, that his racial and religious opinions are against him, as a public man. Then, when he has some sensible views to offer on the question of tariff reform, he is restrict-

ed from doing anything practical, by his connection with Imperial Federation, which has ideas of its own on fiscal matters. Indeed, Mr. McCarthy has turned himself into a Jonah, and more's the pity, because he is a clever man, a clear-thinking man, and independent enough to do a world of good, if he only had a mind to.

We ask our readers to read Mr. Desjardins' letter clear through. It is full of information. It is well expressed. It is patriotic in tone. It is sound in principle. It puts French-Canadianism on a proper footing before the community. It deals with the sacrifices which French Canada has made. It teaches a lesson which all true sons of Canada must learn and consider.

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A
SERIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

DALTON McCARTHY, Esq.,

Q. C., M. P., etc., etc.

(From the Quebec Morning Chronicle.)

FIRST OPEN LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

I hope that the cordiality of our friendly relations, during the two long and important sessions of the Dominion Parliament I had the honor of a seat in the House of Commons, and the pleasure of being your colleague, will, in your own opinion, sufficiently warrant me to address you this open letter. I have carefully read the report of your speech, on the occasion of the demonstration in your honor at Toronto a few days ago. Though prepared, by your recent course, to hear from you the expression of strange views, on questions of paramount interest to the welfare of our country, I must frankly admit my surprise at what appear to have been your earnest remarks that evening. How

you could, gifted as you are, experienced as you must be, propound such a policy, based on such principles, on so erroneous a judgment of the past, on so mistaken a view of the present, and so dangerous a conception of the future requirements of our country, is, with due respect to the weight of your opinion, a wonder to me. How you have deliberately come to the conclusion of taking such a stand, and asking your countrymen to support such a political platform, is beyond my comprehension.

I am justified in the supposition that after what you have said about the French-Canadian element, you cannot possibly be astonished that I deeply resent so unfounded and so inimical an attack on all that, in common with the unanimity of my French compatriots, I hold dear and will always be, in duty bound, ready to defend.

I trust you will kindly bear with me—for I do not intend to use any harsh language, whatever may be my feelings—in appealing to your own judgment, to your own reason, to your own sober second thought, from your views, as I have read them, to the considerations I propose to offer in contradiction thereof.

Sir, you began your vigorous onslaught against my French-Canadian countrymen by an astounding declaration, which would have greatly staggered me, if, for one single moment, I had been able to suppose that you had the shadow of a foundation to make it the

way you did. In order to avoid any possible error on the point under review, please allow me to quote your own words. You are reported as having said :—

“ It was all quiet and right so long as I fought the battles of my country as I did faithfully until the year 1887 ; (am I to conclude that you have since discontinued to do so) but when, in accordance, gentlemen, with the wishes and desires of my then leader, Sir John Macdonald, I announced in the County of Haldimand that French-Canadian domination should no longer rule this country ; when I advocated and endorsed and supported, with all the humble ability which I had, the action of the Government in bringing to justice that arch-rebel Riel ; when I announced that in my humble judgment the French-Canadian was a spoilt child, I was not willing to take back these words at the bidding of these French-Canadians, honestly believing them to be right.”

No words could be plainer. You positively declare that you were authorized by Sir John Macdonald to announce to the electors of the county of Haldimand, and, consequently, through them, to the whole electorate of Canada—“ *that French-Canadian domination should no longer rule this country.*” That he asked you to say so to the intelligent and loyal freemen of Haldimand, I readily believe, even if I had not the authority of your solemn assertion that he did so. I also quite agree that in so saying you were acting “in accordance with the wishes and desires of your then leader, Sir John Macdonald.” I do not wonder at your words in their true and only reasonable sense, but at

the meaning you attach to them, at the construction you wanted your audience to put upon them.

Well might Sir John Macdonald have asked you to affirm that Canada was not to be ruled by French-Canadian domination. Every French-Canadian, from the most influential to the humblest in the land, would have cheerfully asked you to say as much, and is grateful to the great departed leader for having given you this patriotic advice. Would to God that you were still so impressed with the inspiration of his powerful mind to follow the noble examples which, for many years, were your guiding star.

Sir, the French-Canadians have never intended, never aspired to rule Canada from the day which closed a long and bloody struggle, with equal honor for both parties in the fight. They have bowed to their new destiny, and loyally sworn their allegiance to their new Sovereign, with the hope that if, at last, they had been defeated, they could henceforth confidently rely upon the protection of the glorious flag of England, the justice which the Crown of the British Empire administers to all its subjects, the beneficent rule of free institutions, the faithful observance of treaty obligations, the liberality, the friendship, the respect of their new countrymen. All they have aspired to, all they have claimed, all they have desired, was that they should be allowed to give daily evidences of their unswerving loyalty to their Sovereign and to their

country, in defending the authority of the Crown, in upholding its Majesty, in doing their best for its honor and glory by contributing their fair share of work, of earnest efforts, of patriotic exertions, for the prosperity and the national grandeur of this Canada of ours.

I only regret that I was not given the opportunity of standing side by side with you, on the public platform, in the county of Haldimand, to tell the patriotic citizens of this fair constituency that Canada was not to be ruled by French-Canadian domination. And, added to your convincing argument, and to the eloquent periods of my golden-tongue friend Montague, my humble but patriotic voice, would perhaps have carried some weight with the electors of Haldimand. I know that my humble services were not required, for Dr. Montague and yourself were more than equal to the emergency of the occasion. After a hard fought battle you have rallied the electorate of Haldimand to the support of the policy of Sir John Macdonald. You have wonderfully well accomplished your mission, and Sir John Macdonald had then every good reason to trust you.

But, Sir, if it is perfectly true that the French-Canadians do not aspire to rule Canada, they do not relish the prospect of being crushed, destroyed, annihilated, denationalized as you seem determined to try and do. You cannot be surprised if they do not take stock in such a venture. Past experiences should convince you


that the undertaking, in spite of all your exertions, will not prove politically a paying investment.

I must take the liberty of telling you, in all frankness and sincerity, that where you have been very unfair to Sir John Macdonald, very unjust to his great memory and to his life-long devotedness and loyalty to a policy of fair play to all, of peace, of harmony between creeds and races, was in your attempt to create, in the mind of your audience, the impression that when he wished you to tell the electors of Haldimand that this country was no longer to be ruled by French-Canadian domination, he meant that my French-Canadian countrymen were hereafter to be deprived of their legitimate share of political influence in working out the destinies of Canada. I positively joint issue with you on that point. From the very bottom of my heart and soul I feel sure that Sir John Macdonald never told you anything of the kind, never uttered a word, never mooted a syllable, which could be so construed by his most violent opponent, much less by one of his most trusted personal and political friends. As a solemn guarantee that I am right, I have his whole public career, the deeds of his whole life, his words in and out of Parliament. You know as well as I do,—and you ought to know even much better,—how hard and how long he had to struggle in Ontario against the charge that he was the subservient tool of the French-Canadian domination. He always answered what was the truth, and nothing but the truth, that he was not the sup-

porter of the domination of any race or creed, but the loyal public servant of all, the upholder of justice and fair play, the protector, as far as lay in his power, of the rights of minorities. For many years you defended him to the best of your ability, which amounted to a great deal, for, without indulging in any kind of flattery whatever,—from which I am specially precluded under present circumstances,—I am animated by a sufficient feeling of fairness to congratulate you upon the fact that you are an able man. By what process of reasoning, by what phases of sentiment have you come to the conclusion that what you have so well and so eloquently said, during so many years, was all wrong, and that the leader whom you followed with devotion and supported with all your might, because you believe him to be a great statesman, ruling far above national and creed prejudices and passions, was only a political trickster, unworthy of your confidence. For, if he was the kind of man you now so unfairly represent him to have been, you will agree with me that he would not have deserved the confidence of any honest elector, much less of an influential public man as you were.

I have other very conclusive evidence that you have entirely misrepresented Sir John Macdonald.


Fortunately for his fame, for historical truth, for the future good of Canada, you were not the leading actor on the stage, during the long and often renewed electoral contest in the fair land of the county of Haldimand,



Our mutual friend, the eloquent Montague, I remember well, also happened to be around there. Like yourself, he was the trusted supporter of your then leader. If my memory serves me right, he was the standard-bearer during those very glorious days. You were, you claim, his right hand man. Well and good. Granted you were. Our friend Montague is good-natured, kind-hearted, unpretentious, loyal to the core, true as steel. I am sure he will not begrudge you your due share of merit and glory for the great achievements, in the county of Haldimand, of the party to which you then belonged with all the might of your soul and the earnestness of your heart. Nevertheless, he was the worthy standard-bearer of what you both believed to be a great national cause. He must have known what were the real views and sentiments of Sir John Macdonald. You cannot possibly pretend that you were the only mortal whom Sir John would trust in a crisis like that to which you allude in your speech. How astonished, how amazed, he (Dr. Montague) must have been in reading the report of your remarks at the Toronto meeting in your honor, that when, *in accordance with the wishes and desires of his then leader*, he was eloquently and patriotically speaking words of peace, of harmony, of mutual fair play, of justice, of hostility to the ruling of Canada by the domination of any particular race, he was all the while unconsciously playing the artful game of a cunning politician, and not following the loyal teachings of a true statesman and a sincere patriot.

But, Sir, our friend Montague knows better. Happily, he is alive to avenge the memory of his beloved leader, and to uphold the truth, and magnificently he performs that duty. On Saturday night, the 22nd of April, he was in Montreal, in the great and prosperous metropolis of Canada, where creeds and nationalities are so kindly leading their way to future development. He had the honor to address a very intelligent and influential gathering, hundreds of leading men in all walks of life, assembled on that evening for the worthy purpose of honoring the memory of the great man you so long loved and followed. After your Toronto speech, it is no surprise to me that you were not there. But Dr. Montague was. As was properly expected from him, he took up the gauntlet which you had thrown at him and at the revered dead leader. The hall where he spoke still rings with the powerful echo of his patriotic words, with the indignant denunciation of the stand you have taken. Please read with me the following few lines of his eloquent address :—

“ Referring to the generous reception given him in entering the room, and when arising to speak, he said he was not forgetful that in this they sought to express the feeling of friendship and good neighborhood that existed in Quebec for their sister Province, a constituency of which he had the honor to represent. He came from the Niagara peninsula, which was first tilled by British loyalists in exile from the United States, and every foot of which was made sacred by the heroic deeds of Canada's and Britain's sons, and so he felt at



home in the historic Province of Quebec, whose people's blood was spilt in defence of the institutions we loved, and whose hearts beat time to Canada's best interests in the future and lent strength and progress to her part. (Loud cheers.) Their hearty reception and good feelings to Ontario found a hearty response in hearts and homes there. True, they had disturbing spirits who attempted to stir up discord with the French, a few wandering minstrels, whose doleful tunes, however, were simply the pipings of disappointed ambition, but among the great people of the Western Province there was no trace, either among orange or green, of bitterness or jealousy towards their French sister Province. There was nothing in the history of the past or the condition of the present to cause anything of the kind. True, Quebec spoke a different language, but he trusted that they were broad enough to sympathize with Quebec's people in their desire to hand down their beautiful language to their children. Their creeds were different, but every creed was sacred beneath the folds of the British flag. Their forefathers had, it was true, contested the right of Britain to rule in this country, but he could not forget at the same time that those same men had afterwards given up their lives in defence of British homes and institutions, and at a later period, when the United States invaded our shores at a time when Britain was engaged in the death struggle for freedom in Europe, those same men laid down their lives for their country in repelling the invasion as bravely as their compatriots in Ontario. Later on, when Confederation was being established and the scheme was taking practical shape, our departed chieftain found his greatest confederates among the people of this Province, in a McGee and a Cartier. In

the years that have passed since then Quebec may have made mistakes. As the result of demagogism, passion and prejudices had been aroused, but when the time of trial came the people stood by our chieftain and gave strength to his arm, by which he was enabled to conduct the affairs of our country on a scheme broad enough to bear the burden of whatever danger the future may have had in store."

No wonder that those eloquent words were received with an outburst of applause. Let every well-wisher of the future happiness of Canada pray to God that they shall be re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of this wide Dominion, that they shall be repeated in every home of the land. May you ponder over them, and, once more returning to your own former self, finally make up your mind that you are now pursuing a most dangerous course.

Sir, you can, if you like, exercise your privilege of changing your political course. You are alive, in good health, able to defend yourself. You can make your case. You can travel all over the Dominion, from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, to appeal to the electorate. The people of Canada will pronounce judgment upon you, as upon all the other political leaders. But, Sir, there is a sacred plot of land upon which you have not the right to thread the steps of your unfair march to fame and political prominence. All the friends of the dead statesman, and even his opponents, will stand up to protect it. You know.

where is the sacred plot of land. You must remember that, on the day when our beloved leader was laid to his eternal rest, bearing the brunt of the heat of the day, as we had so often done on the political field of battle, we marched together to the burying place. We were both deeply moved. And when we took leave of his mortal remains, you were sure, as I was, that Canada had lost one of its noblest sons, its greatest statesman, a loyal and devoted servant. When I shook hands with you after the exchange of our feelings of regret and sorrow, it could not have entered into my mind that less than two years after, you would stand upon a public platform in the prosperous city of Toronto, which always so loyally supported him, addressing thousands still growing enthusiastic at the mere mention of his name, and telling them what you wanted them to believe of Sir John Macdonald's course, after the words I have quoted from your speech as reported.

Sir, I see by the report of your speech, at Toronto, that you somewhat complained of the length of the open letter which my good friend, Mr. Mackintosh, has considered it his duty to address to you. I will take heed of the advice, and will not trespass too much upon your valuable time. But you will, no doubt, pardon me if I call again your attention to some other observations of mine, in a fair spirit of criticism, of several points of your speech, on that celebrated occasion of your new departure. Be sure that I will only do

so with the hope of succeeding to dispel from your mind the prejudices that, I am at a loss to understand how, have crept in it against my French-Canadian fellow-countrymen. You have so long induced me to believe that your intelligence was forever opened only to broad considerations, to a wide conception of the duties and the responsibility of a public man, that I am still confident that you will not purposely turn a deaf ear to what I have to say in favor of my kinsmen.

Please believe me, with personal regard,

Yours very sincerely,

L. G. DESJARDINS,

Late M.P. for L'Islet.

Quebec, April 28, 1893.



SECOND OPEN LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

I presume that the tone of my first open letter to you was courteous enough not to displease you, nor hurt your feelings, however much you may disapprove of my arguments and my sentiments. I can assure you that I do not write for the mere purpose of annoying you, but under the impulse of a deep sense of duty. The only favor I ask from you, which our former, and I hope I may yet add our present personal friendship and personal regard make me crave for, is that you should have the kindness to read my humble but earnest remarks with the same spirit of fairness and patriotic aspiration with which I write them. You have taken the liberty of making a most unjustifiable attack upon my French-Canadian countrymen: I have no doubt that you are chivalrous enough not to deny me the liberty, much less the undoubted right, to come to their rescue, to publicly espouse their cause, to plead their case with devotion, if not with ability, to meet your charges, which, with the strongest conviction the soul of an honest man can be possessed of, I sincerely believe to be unfounded and uncalled for.

Another point I also wish to make very clear. I can equally assure you that I do not write as a party man, nor with the inspiration of party feeling and ambition.

Though, as I openly said in Ottawa, only a few days ago, I was always a strong party man, as long as I was in active political life, I have likewise always been sufficiently independent to do my duty as a public man to the best of my ability, according to the dictates of my conscience, and to what I considered for the good of my country. But, happily, I am now out of active political life. If I was not, I would not write you through the press. I would not hesitate to meet you on the public platform to defend my French-Canadian countrymen against your attacks, if you would condescend to discuss such an important public question with so humble an individual as myself. If I had still the honor of being a member of the Parliament of Canada, I would challenge you on the floor of the House of Commons to support your charges with reasonable evidence, and I would surely disprove them with undeniable facts, if not with the eloquence you could put forth, and that the subject under review would certainly deserve.

But I am no longer a public man, and you must remember that only a few weeks ago, in the lobby of the House of Commons in Ottawa, you were kind enough to tell me that you regretted my withdrawal from public life. I felt, and still feel, sure of the sincerity of your expression of sorrow, though I am fully aware how little the country is losing by my absence from Parliament. But, if I have not now the great honor of being one of the representatives of the people of Canada, I glory to have still, and for as long as I

shall live, the greater honor of being a loyal British subject, though a French-Canadian born, and one of that race you think and say should disappear from the face of the earth without further delay. You have solemnly pledged your word to the thousands who listened to you at the Toronto meeting, on the evening of the 12th ult., that henceforth you were to devote your ability, which is great, your energy, which is proportionate to your talents, to bring about, as soon as possible, the national demise of my French-Canadian countrymen.

Sir, please allow me to repeat with the greatest pride that I am a loyal British subject. Though born a French-Canadian, let me tell you that I have been brought up by humble but honest and loyal parents. From my early youth, I have been taught by them, and by the members of the Roman Catholic clergy who educated me, to be always true, under all possible circumstances, to my word and to my solemn oath. I claim the merit of having so far followed their teachings, and I am more than ever determined to do so until my last breath. In four different capacities, I have several times taken the oath of allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, the Sovereign of the British Empire, and, consequently, of this great Dominion. I have sworn to be the faithful subject of my Sovereign as a citizen of Canada, as a member of Parliament, as a public officer, and also as a volunteer officer, for I am proud to inform you that I have been a member of our militia ever since 1864, first as a full private, subse-

quently as a non-commissioned and next as a commissioned officer, and that since 1884 I have the great honor to be the Lt.-Colonel in command of one of the oldest and most efficient battalions of the Canadian force.

Many times bound by my solemn oath, in those four different capacities, I will tell you plainly that I would be deeply insulted if any one was to cast the shadow of a doubt on the sincerity of my loyalty to Her Majesty, to British institutions, to my country, meaning not only Canada, but the whole Empire of which I am one of the humblest, but, as I claim the right, and as I am in duty bound to be, one of the truest sons.

I strongly felt it important to preface my further criticism of your Toronto speech with those remarks, in order to assert still more my right as a freeman, as a citizen of Canada, and as a loyal British subject, to protect, to the best of my ability and energy, my French-Canadian countrymen against the undeserved and cruel blow you are aiming at them with the solemnly avowed purpose of denationalizing them, and denying them their sacred and vested rights as loyal subjects of their beloved Sovereign.

Sir, I have another reason which, I feel sure, fully justifies me to address you as I do. I have been in active political life for over twenty years, either as a journalist or as a representative of the people of Canada. I sat for nearly ten years in the Quebec Legislative Assembly, and for two years in the House of Commons in Ottawa. I often spoke in the debates of these two

Houses and on the public platform. I claim the merit of having invariably, even under the most trying circumstances, always followed the same course for equal justice to all, always spoken the same loyal language, whether my audience was a French one, an English, a Scotch, or an Irish one. That very fact, the truth of which could be proved by the official report of my words, and all my hearers on all occasions—and several times I had the great honor to count you amongst them—undoubtedly gives me an additional right to criticize your Toronto speech in the courteous, but energetic, way I am doing.

Referring to the famous question of the Jesuit Estate Act, you are reported to have said :

"And I may tell you that, with regard to that Jesuit Estate Act, the Conservative party at first had by no means come to a certain definite conclusion. My voice was raised for the disallowance of an Act which was a disgrace to a British constitution, and though I was not able to prevail upon my then leader to adopt that course, it was not because Sir John Macdonald did not equally agree with me, but because he had been controlled for some time before and for some short time afterwards by the French-Canadian influence, which, if I live, gentlemen, it is my purpose shall find its end in the history of this country."

Please allow me, Sir, to ask you if it is possibly true that you have uttered the above quoted sentence, and that before an intelligent audience of thousands of the free electors of Toronto? I will frankly tell you that I can scarcely believe it, if you do not positively answer

me that, as a matter of fact, you have really done so. But I have just before me your very carefully reported speech, and until I hear from you, I must take it for granted that you have pronounced the following words:

“ And though I was not able to prevail upon my then leader to adopt that course (the disallowance of the Jesuit Estate Act), it was not because Sir John Macdonald did not agree with me, but because he had been controlled for some time before and for some short time afterwards by the French-Canadian influence, which, if I live, gentlemen, it is my purpose shall find its end in the history of this country.”

So, you have positively taken your stand, and the first plank of your new political platform is *to put an end to French-Canadian influence in the history of this country*. My French-Canadian countrymen will at least be grateful to you for one thing, the frankness of the avowal of your cruel design. A well-known enemy is less dangerous than a concealed one.

Sir, it is almost incredible that you can have uttered such words. I will speak my mind openly, and tell you that such utterances are unworthy of a Christian, unworthy of a British subject, unworthy of a statesman, unworthy of a man.

I say they are unworthy of a Christian, and why? Sir, you would only realize your purpose, by succeeding in bringing about the total extinction of the million and a half French-Canadians who live happy and hopeful in Canada, under the protection of England and its free institutions. This would be, I solemnly repeat,

unworthy of a Christian, and would prove that the world would be retracing its steps to the barbarous times of old.

The French-Canadians exist, as all other nationalities do, by the will of the Almighty. If Providence had so wished, there would never have been any French-Canadians at all. But the Divine Will has decided otherwise, and I ask all the Christians of Canada, and even of the whole world, of whatever denominations they may be, if it is very Christian-like for a public man, who aspires to rule his country, to proclaim that his political platform will have for its primary object the national and natural death of a million and a half of his countrymen. For it amounts to nothing less, if your utterances have any meaning.

Sir, those words of yours, above quoted, are unworthy of a British subject. What is the greatest pride of a true Englishman? Is it not that England is the classic land of freedom. Is it not that under Great Britain's institutions, every man, whether he be Scotch, Irish, German, Italian, French, or Indian born, is free and protected by the Majesty and the justice of the Crown, the moment he has taken the oath of allegiance, on condition that he be loyal, true, faithful, law-abiding. In the name of what barbarous Right, of what cruel principles, would you make an exception, against the French-Canadians, to such a glorious general rule all over the great and mighty British Empire.

Your words are unworthy of a statesman, because any one deserving that name would have indignantly

scorned at the mere proposal to utter them, and would have blushed to pronounce them before an audience of British subjects and freemen.

The utterance I have quoted from your speech is moreover unworthy of a man, and why? Because, without any knowledge whatever of Christian morals, without the obligation of being a good and loyal British subject, without the intelligence of a statesman, human feeling alone should have stopped those words upon your lips, and even slaughtered them in your throat, if they had by surprise entered your mind.

Sir, a man is a man, of whatever race he may be by the accident of birth, a fact for which surely he is not to be held responsible and tyrannized. So say Christian morals and teachings. Will you pretend to tell me that because they are French-Canadian born, my compatriots have no right to their fair share of the gifts of a generous Divine Providence, of the warmth and the light of the sun that daily shines over their heads, of the air they breathe, of the space in which they move, of the varied resources of the earth and their golden fruits, of the enjoyments of the heart and of the intelligence, of the happiness derived from human freedom in all its various and glorious forms? They have, as human beings, the right to that fair share of the advantages of God's creation, and I know of no other man but you, in this broad Dominion, who would deny it to them.


Do not complain that I exaggerate the meaning of your words. They are plain, and cannot possibly be

misconstrued. The purpose you have pledged yourself to, is, if you live, to put an end to French-Canadian influence in the history of this country. Let me tell you, in all sincerity, that if Providence blesses you with some more years of earthly life, you could employ them to a far better object. But, of course, like any one else, you are free to exercise your moral liberty of choosing between right and wrong. It is evident that you have finally, after several years of hesitation, made up your mind to side with injustice and wrong.

You have solemnly made known the objective point of your further exertions. Would you kindly give me some information about the ways and means you intend employing to reach the end you have in view. It seems to me that you are undertaking a rather difficult task, with very little prospect of success. To put an end to all further French-Canadian influence in the history of this country, bear it well in mind, you must do nothing less than annihilate the million and a half of your French-Canadian countrymen. Having fully considered this, by no means pleasant, question, I can see but two practical ways of working out your purpose. First, a general slaughter of the French-Canadians by force of arms ; second, if, per chance, you were kind enough to come to the sympathetic conclusion not to go to such an extreme, the passing of a law, by the Dominion Parliament, approved of by the Imperial Parliament, depriving the French-Canadians of all their religious, civil and political rights, making so many slaves of them all, men, women, children, and organizing a

sufficient military force to keep them well bound to their tyrannical chains. You will never, were you to live two centuries more, fulfil your purpose, if you do not do one or the other of the above two things. Outside of those two resources of success, in your rather wild venture, you are doomed to a signal failure. You can only, as a final result, ruin yourself politically, after bringing untold misery upon your country. For, as long as there is left a French-Canadian free in the land, with the right to worship his God as he pleases, to work, to own property, to study, to develop his intellectual and moral faculties, to think, to write, to speak, to vote, to sit in Parliament, to shoulder his rifle for the defence of his Sovereign and his country, French-Canadian influence will not be at an end in this great Dominion.

Suppose, for one moment, that you were to try the first practical way of putting an end to French-Canadian influence, how would you proceed? You might take command of the army, and starting on your new errand, you might, after having gently done away with the several thousands of French-Canadians in Ontario, march down to the Province of Quebec to commence your slaughtering process with the certainty, of course, that the million and a quarter of my French-Canadian countrymen, here, would be grateful to you for such an honor, and would benevolently lay down their heads on the block, as so many tender sheep. Please tell me how many recruits would cheerfully enlist, in Ontario, to follow you in that crusade. Don't



you think that you would run the risk of being left entirely alone to compose all your army, general and full privates, Lt.-Colonel O'Brien himself refusing to be false to his oath as a volunteer officer in the Dominion of Canada. Grant me that you had better give up all notions of the kind.

Next, what about the only second practical way of solving the question to which final settlement you want to employ the rest of your worthy life. At the next session of the Dominion Parliament, will you propose such a law as the one I have mentioned, a moment ago, as the only other practical means of putting completely an end to French-Canadian influence in this country? If you would dare do so, how many members of the House of Commons and of the Senate would vote for your very liberal bill? Are you sure you would get my friend, Lt.-Colonel O'Brien, to second your motion only to introduce the bill. And, if at the next general elections, you were to ask the freemen of Canada to express their opinion upon such a bill, how many would pronounce in favor of it? Let me answer the question, and affirm positively that from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, not one sane man would.

You had much better conclude with me that you are undertaking an altogether impossible task. Take my friendly advice, and give it up at once. You can employ your time and your undoubted talents in a much more profitable, patriotic, and honorable way.

You will pardon me for having indulged in a little

jocular digression. The fact is that, considered from the point of view of the impossibility of its execution, your plan of campaign would look very ludicrous, if such fearful consequences were not certainly to follow the least serious attempt to carry it out.

Please believe me, with personal regard,

Yours very sincerely,

L. G. DESJARDINS,
Late M.P. for L'Islet.

Quebec, May 4, 1893.



THIRD OPEN LETTER.

DEAR SIR,

You are reported to have said to the Toronto meeting that greeted you, the following sentence :

" But I am not going to tolerate the perpetuation of the discords and the unhappy divisions which have been caused in the Province of Quebec by the unfortunate system which, according to my reading of history, has been pursued by them ever since the Canadas were united in 1841."

When I first read those words of yours, I paused to wonder how far a man's mind can be swayed, out of all common sense and reason, by prejudice. Your reading of history is evidently a very blinded one. What can you possibly mean when you speak of the "discords and the unhappy divisions" that have existed in the Province of Quebec ever since 1841. I do not know of any such things. My humble way of reading history is the very reverse of yours. To form a sound opinion on the matter, I have not only, like yourself, the resources of historical information, but I have moreover the personal knowledge of what has taken place in this Province during the greater part of the half century you refer to.

In contradiction of your assertion, I positively affirm that ever since the Union of the Canadas in 1841, no

country on earth has been blessed with more harmony, peace, good will and kindness of feeling than the Province of Quebec. When responsible government was granted us by the mother country, the people of Lower Canada, of former days, settled down with loyalty and good faith to the practise of self-government. Of course, there were differences of opinion. At times there was considerable political activity. Public questions were discussed. The people met to consider matters of general interest. They spoke freely ; they voted likewise. In doing all this, they were surely acting within their constitutional rights. But, all the while, quiet, order, respect of law and others' opinions prevailed. Men of different creeds and races joined hands to work for the good and the prosperity of their common country. A great deal has been accomplished ; much more will yet be done in due course of time.

We have had no racial quarrel, no religious strife. The French-Canadian majority has always been just, fair and generous towards the English-speaking minority in this Province. Very often constituencies almost entirely French and Roman Catholic have elected English-speaking and Protestant members of Parliament, and never had any reason to regret having done so.

You had better come down to Quebec and witness for yourself how cordial, how kind are the daily relations of all the members of our mixed community. You will see no sign whatever of discords and unhappy

divisions. On matters of public policy they agree to differ. You are not the only man in Canada that can claim the right to think for himself, to speak his mind, to write his views, to vote according to his honest convictions. We do the same down here. But, when I have thought, spoken, written and voted, the way I consider best for my country, I do not follow your very bad example, and threaten my neighbour with the loss of his legitimate political influence, because he thinks, speaks, writes and votes differently.

Sir, I am the more surprised at your wholesale denunciation of the political course of my French-Canadian countrymen since the Union of the Canadas, in 1841, that you are surely one of the last men from whom it could possibly have been expected. I will take the liberty to refresh your memory on several important points. Perhaps will you then be a more reliable reader of historical events.

As you know, for the last half century, ever since the granting of responsible government to Canada, the French-Canadians have been divided between the two great political parties. If I am not mistaken, and if I read history with some attention, it seems to me that the same political phenomenon has been seen everywhere, in every country blessed with free institutions, in Ontario, in all the Provinces of the Dominion, in England, in all the self-governing British Colonies, in France, in the United States, in short all the world over. I have myself sided, as you well know, with the Conservative party. As a rule that party has repre-

sented the majority of the French-Canadians for the last fifty years. On the other hand, the Liberal party has always rallied the support of an influential minority. In making their choice between these two parties, and the different platforms their leaders submitted to the approval of the electorate, my French-Canadian compatriots only exercised an undoubted constitutional privilege which no one has the right to deny them, much less to threaten them, as you have done, with nothing less than political disfranchisement for having used that privilege the way they thought proper. You are at liberty to think, if you like, that under some given circumstances they might have acted otherwise. But, if you have this liberty, have they not that of believing that, all things considered, their course was the better. If, as a freeman, I claim the right to criticize my neighbor's action with regard to public matters, how can I challenge his right to criticize mine?

I have no doubt that long ago you must have studied and learned—many study and never learn—the fundamental principles of human freedom. You aspire to the honorable rank of a political philosopher. I am not over pretentious. I may not always be able to have a fair conception of the wide range of your thoughts. But I have sufficient notions of philosophy to know that the liberty of a freeman is necessarily limited by that of another freeman. Without that limitation, there would be no human freedom on earth. Nations would be governed by tyrannical instincts and fanaticism.

Misery would reign supreme instead of happiness and hope.


Surely you are the last man that should reprobate the political course followed by the French-Canadians ever since 1841, for the very good reason that just as much as any of them you are responsible for it. You are not only a very unreliable reader of history, but you soon forget all about it. You are several years above fifty. You are my senior by thirteen years. You have commenced very young to take an active part in the political struggles of your country. Your rise was rapid and promised much. You were soon looked at as one of the leading men of the future. Twice an unsuccessful candidate in 1872 and 1874, you were elected to the House of Commons in 1876. You have at once taken a prominent position in Parliament, for which you were very well qualified by your training during many years of valuable services to your party. So that, to a high degree, you are responsible for the political course of the Conservative party. The majority of the French-Canadians has always supported the policy of that party. Your speeches, your Parliamentary eloquence, your influence had weight with many of them, and induced them to follow what they then considered your good example.

If, as you pretend and say it is your firm purpose to accomplish, the French-Canadians are to be practically disfranchised by the total destruction of all their influence, on account of the political course the majority of them has followed according to your often repeated

advice, what shall be done with yourself? If they are guilty, you are still more so, because you are now forced to acknowledge that you were one of the principal charmers that deceived them. If they deserve punishment, you surely merit the severest chastisement an indignant public opinion can inflict upon a political leader.

Do you not perceive how wrong, how absurd it is for you to tell my French-Canadian countrymen that they must be forever deprived of the least particle of influence in the history of this country, because for years and years they have believed in you, they have had faith in your political sagacity, in the soundness of your views, in the logic of your arguments, in the patriotism of your words and deeds. For do not be mistaken, it amounts to nothing less. In my humble opinion, formed according to the dictates of common sense, if you have so well succeeded in deceiving my French-Canadian compatriots, they are not to be cruelly dealt with, but rather pitied for having been the victims of their own loyalty and their misplaced confidence in unworthy schemers.

Now that he is gone to his eternal rest, that his voice is no longer heard in Parliament and re-echoed throughout this broad Dominion, you most unfairly reproach Sir John Macdonald with having been unduly controlled by French-Canadian influence, forgetting that for the last twenty-five years you have supported him with all your might in the course he followed, according to my compatriots' dictation, as you now so incre-




dibly pretend. If he was really guilty of the crime you consider so atrocious, do you not think that you carry a large share of the deadly weight of his guilt. Were you not, for many years, an influential and very intelligent party to the dark conspiracy to sacrifice public good to the truckling of the illegitimate French-Canadian domination. Were you not wilfully deceiving the people of Ontario when you so often put forth all the strength and warmth of your eloquence to rally them to the support of the policy of Sir John Macdonald, whom you now charge with having been but the subservient slave of my French-Canadian countrymen, sacrificing all the best interests of the Dominion to their exigencies, to their prejudices, and to what you call their reactionary ideas.

Will you allow me to tell you why you no longer approve of Sir John Macdonald's course? It is merely because he was guided by true statesmanship, and that, unfortunately, for some time past your mind has been overpowered by prejudice. Statesmanship and fanaticism inspire political leaders very differently. Outside of all party considerations, Sir John Macdonald saw that only two courses were opened to him in his responsible position of one of the political leaders of Canada. As a statesman—and you know just as well as I do that he was one of the greatest of this century the world over—he considered that his duty was to scorn the teachings of fanaticism and to listen to the inspiration of broad national sentiments and aspirations. Surely you will not deny me nor any one else, the

liberty, as a freeman, to think and say that he was right and you are wrong. I have no doubt that you will grant me that he had more experience than you had, that his political genius was as great as yours—be it said without disparagement of the amount a generous Providence has allotted to you—that his judgment of the wants of the future of the country, that his ability in the art of government were as far reaching as yours were and are now. And after your two great minds, his and yours, have been pondering on the best course to follow, you now say that he should have become a fanatic. He by far preferred to remain a real statesman to the last. Now that the people of Canada, who have greatly benefitted by the sagacious and patriotic course so magnanimously taken and so perseveringly followed by Sir John Macdonald, can more properly appreciate how important it was for the future of our glorious Dominion that your present views were not acted upon, they can better judge by the consequences which would have followed the adoption of such a policy as you recommend, had it been carried out by the responsible advisers of the Crown and by Parliament, compared to those they have witnessed with satisfaction and enjoyed with delight.

How can you not foresee that your new course is fraught with the greatest dangers. What would be its inevitable result if it was to meet the approval of many? Any one who has read something of the history of the world—and I suppose you have—can very easily see Canada would have to go through the ordeal of years of religious, national and political strife. Creed



would be raised against creed, race against race. For so many years, the prosperity and development of the country would be seriously checked, its energy hampered, its happiness destroyed, and very likely, at last, the great union of the Provinces would prove a failure.

Thank God, so far the profound sense of duty, the political sagacity, the sound judgment, the wisdom, the prestige of a great statesman, the spirit of justice and fair play, the respect of constitutional rights, which animated the Parliament of Canada, the intelligence and patriotism of our free people, have averted the evils which your bad advice, if followed, would bring upon our dear country. Happily true statesmanship has prevailed. After having enjoyed the proud satisfaction of the most solemn approval of his course by Parliament and by the people of Canada, Sir John Macdonald had, moreover, before the close of his public career and his farewell to his countrymen, of all creeds and races, whom he had so loved and so patriotically served to his last breath, the delight of witnessing peace, harmony, contentment and hopefulness all over the land where he has left so many monuments of the powers of his mind, of the devotion of his heart, of the earnestness of his whole soul for the good of his country.

That French-Canadian influence, ever since 1841, has been duly considered, not only by Sir John Macdonald, but also by almost the unanimity of the political leaders of Canada, was only fair and just. How you can reasonably object to it, I would not be able to understand, if you had not kindly condescended to tell

the people of the Dominion that hereafter your purpose will be to put an end to all kind of French-Canadian influence in the history of this country.

But, Sir, when you affirm that Sir John Macdonald was unduly controlled by the French-Canadian influence, you are once more very unfair to our departed leader, and to my French compatriots. In the discussion and consideration of public questions, my French-Canadian countrymen had the right to their legitimate share of political influence. They have had it, and no more. It is very narrow-minded on your part to find fault with it. Moreover, your contention that Sir John Macdonald was unduly controlled by French-Canadian influence and, consequently, coerced to take a course the very reverse of that which he really believed best for the good of the country of which he was the leading statesman, is altogether without foundation and an outrage to the memory of the great patriot we so long admired, but whom you have evidently ceased to respect, since you pass such judgments upon the motives which guided him.

I feel confident that the many thousand electors who will read this letter, irrespective of creed and racial consideration, will approve of the remarks I have just made. Let every well wisher of the great future of this wide Dominion rejoice at the glorious fact that the good sense and the sound patriotism of our people, throughout the length and breadth of Canada, have so far triumphed over prejudice and misguided personal ambition, and have spared to our country the misery



its most devoted and ablest servant so strongly always prophesied would be the awful result of the course you now advise.

After your remarks at Toronto, I would have been recreant to my duty, if I had not proved that your charges against Sir John Macdonald, that he was dominated by undue French-Canadian influence, and against my compatriots, for having acted as you said they did, were without the slightest shadow of reasonable evidence, and only based upon the prejudices which evidently have swayed your mind for sometime past.

Let me appeal once more to your calmer reason, enlightened by the events of the last few years, to the natural and generous impulse of your heart. Let me ask you, for our country's sake, for its future happiness and grandeur, to reconsider the decision you have unfortunately arrived at, to follow a more patriotic course, and to cheerfully join hands with all the friends and lovers of freedom, irrespective of creed or race, and of party interests, to work out the great destinies which will be the glorious lot of this Dominion, if we are all true to our common country, to ourselves, and to our duties as freemen, as loyal British subjects!

One or two other points of your Toronto speech, it is my bounded duty to criticize next week, and I will bring these open letters to a close.

Please believe me, with personal regard,

Yours very sincerely,

L. G. DESJARDINS,

Late M. P. for L'Islet.

Quebec, May 10, 1893.

FOURTH OPEN LETTER.


DEAR SIR,

I see by the report of your speech, that in a moment of enthusiasm, which is easily understood, you eloquently pointed to the words: "Equal Rights for All," which occupied a prominent place in the decorations of the crowded hall where you addressed a very intelligent and patriotic audience, such as always meet in the prosperous city of Toronto to hear public questions discussed, and that you very properly exclaimed:

"But, Sir, the issue to which I desire to draw your attention is that which that motto brings to my mind."

I am sure you carried the meeting by this clever appeal to the sense of justice of all those who were attentively listening to you. I have no doubt you were warmly applauded, as you would be anywhere in Canada, even in the remotest part of this Province of Quebec, of which you think so little.

If you are sincere, and if "Equal Rights for All" is really the great issue you wish the electorate of the Dominion to pronounce upon, you will receive the unanimous support of my French-Canadian countrymen, on the only condition that they will enjoy the advantages to be derived from the sound principle you say should govern our country. But, Sir, do not wonder that before throwing their lot with you, they will ask



you to be kind enough to explain what you mean by the motto you pointed at. Do you not consider that, after your solemn pledge that, if you live, your purpose will be to put forever an end to French-Canadian influence in the history of this country, your sentence, above quoted, is rather strange reading? What a splendid application of the principle you promised your audience to battle for, you are making in striving, to the best of your admitted ability, to practically disfranchise a million and a half of your countrymen, one-third of the loyal population of this Dominion. If you were to achieve such a success, in your new crusade, would you be able to congratulate yourself upon the triumph of "Equal Rights for All," as the result of your patriotic labors?

Sir, let me tell you that the French-Canadians are, have always been in the past, and will be in the future, amongst the staunchest supporters of a true and honest policy of "Equal Rights." They know that, as Christians, as freemen, and as British subjects, it is their bounden and sacred duty to uphold such a policy, in obedience to moral law, as well as to the inspiration of their unswerving loyalty to their Sovereign and to their country. What they have sworn to do unto others, they have the right to claim should be done unto them. You are, so far, the only politician of any standing in this wide Dominion, who has solemnly taken the responsibility of denying them that undoubted right. They confidently hope, more for the country's good at large, than for their own sake, that you will be the

first and last, and that until you reach the day which will close your earthly career, you will be the only man living, under the protection of British laws and freedom, for the very inglorious purpose of depriving a million and a half of the most loyal subjects of our Gracious Queen of all their constitutional privileges.


Please also allow me to quote from your speech, the following sentence :

" Now, I have stated before, and I repeat here to-night, that no one imagines a more insane project than to start a young country, a great country, as we hope this yet will be, on the basis of continuing two separate languages, and consequently two separate nationalities."

Previous to that outburst of your indignation at the project you gently consider as an insane one, you are also reported to have said, referring to a debate in the House of Commons on the North-West policy of the Government :

" I wound up my speech by saying it was a danger to Confederation, the attempt of the French-Canadian people to perpetuate their nationality and divide the people into two separate and distinct bodies."

Sir, it seems to me you have been hitting rather high by these sentences, for if there is any insanity in the fact of the existence in Canada of two separate nationalities under the same constitution and the same Sovereign power, Providence is alone responsible for it, and not likely to beg your pardon for what you evidently consider a serious offence. When the long struggle of England and France for supremacy in this



North-American Continent closed by the final triumph of the former, when Wolfe and Montcalm both shed their blood for the honor of their respective country, you ought to know that there were some sixty thousand French-Canadians settled on the virgin soil of Canada. The glorious flag of England was hoisted at Quebec. It has ever since protected them and the succeeding generations of their kin. Their natural right to live, to till the soil, to be free and happy, was recognized and respected by their new Rulers. They were human. They loved. They married. Their homes, where every day they prayed to God in French for the safety, the honor, the glory of their new Sovereign, were blessed with many children whom they brought up as so many loyal sons of the British Empire. They rapidly increased in number. Such was the start of this young, of this great country, on the basis of two separate languages, and consequently two separate nationalities. How would you have prevented it, if you had then lived, with the over generous and liberal notion of the policy of Equal Rights you are now recommending, I would like very much to know, and it is for you to say. Would you have at once torn to pieces the solemn treaty of peace between England and France? Would you have buried, alive or dead, the sixty thousand French-Canadians who saw with grief the flag of their ancient Mother Country going back over the ocean never to return, but who manly and honestly pledged themselves to be loyal to that of Great Britain? Would you have trampled under foot

all their religious, civil and political rights? Would you have taken over their property, destroyed their sweet homes, chased away the men from the tender embrace of their wives and children, desolated the land of their birth, and written in the history of Great Britain the dark pages of the destruction of a gallant race, vanquished, but always worthy of the respect of the victors, of the admiration of the civilized world? If I may judge by your present views and feelings, such would have been your purpose, for no other course would have been opened to you to prevent the perpetuation of two separate languages and two separate nationalities in Canada.

Happily, then and ever since, there were in the Parliament of free England statesmen more liberal, whose mind was capable of a more logical conception of equal rights than yours. They gradually increased the constitutional privileges of the French-Canadians, so much so that, in 1841, my compatriots were granted complete self-government as enjoyed by British subjects. Canadian statesmen have since followed the noble example given them by the leaders of the Imperial Parliament. So it is that duality of language and nationality has been perpetuated in this young country, which, please believe me, is only the greater and the more glorious by the fact that under the ægis of its free institutions, men of different races and creeds can live happy and prosperous, rivaling only in their patriotic exertions for its greatness, and in their loyalty

to the authority of the Crown they have all sworn to defend.

But, Sir, will you please kindly follow me in a short retrospect of the history of the British Empire, and perhaps will you come, like myself, to the conclusion that, after all, the attempt to perpetuate duality of language and nationality in this young country is not so insane a project as you believe. Without claiming the merit of being as sound and clever a reader of historical events as you are, I suppose I can, now and then, take the liberty of giving some of my leisure hours to the study of the onward march of the civilized world, and particularly of that large part of mankind living under the Sovereign Power of England in the five great divisions of the universe. My humble way of reading history, from a somewhat philosophical point of view, has taught me that England, after more than a century of wonderful efforts, has succeeded in building up the greatest empire ever seen, precisely by the broad policy of giving full scope, not only to duality, but even to diversity of nationality and language, in its newly acquired Dominions.

If I remember well, once the United Kingdom of Great Britain was divided into three Sovereign States, England, Scotland and Ireland. If I am not mistaken—and if I am you can call to your assistance your superior historical knowledge to correct me—the fundamental basis of the marvellous Imperial structure, which is the wonder of the world, was the union of

those three independent States. All the great British statesmen have agreed, and still agree, in the sound opinion that without the unity of the three ancient kingdoms, the unity of the Empire could not last. But when England and Scotland were bound together, was it considered an insane project to allow the perpetuation of the glorious Scotch nationality? After so many years of that happy and prosperous union, is it not yet being perpetuated? Are the Scotchmen not as proud as ever of their national traditions? If you have any doubt about it, you had better make it your duty to ask the thousands of them you will meet in Ontario, during the campaign you have undertaken, what are their feelings on that point.

So with Ireland. Would not the Ulstermen themselves join with their countrymen of another creed to protest against any attempt to annihilate Irish nationality, Irish traditions, to put a final end to the perpetuation of the Irish name in the history of the Empire and of the world?

When the authority of the Sovereign of England was extended to the great Indian Empire, was it considered an insane policy to respect the national feelings of the numerous millions of that wonderful country?

Have the British statesmen ever considered as a piece of insanity to allow the free use of the many dialects spoken all over the almost boundless Empire they are called upon to govern? Have they ever looked at the liberty to speak those languages, to cherish and revere


national traditions as a danger and a permanent menace to the maintenance of British Sovereignty over the broad Dominions upon which the sun never sets, but always smiles on prosperous national groups, enjoying the varied advantages of human freedom to the largest extent yet seen since the creation of our planet? Have they not rather believed, with very good reason, that the secret of the grandeur of the British Empire was to be sought and found in that very policy, based upon the immutable principles of eternal justice, which you think very foolish, but which the experience of more than a century have proved to be the most gloriously successful ever adopted?

Since diversity of language and nationality is the rule under the British Crown and the enlightened British policy, will you please tell me why an exception should be made against my French-Canadian countrymen? Why should you be less liberal towards them than you are for the remnants of the Indian tribes of old, whom the Canadian Parliament has enfranchised and called to the dignity of freemen and of British citizenship?

Since you consider it a public duty to allow the Indians of the North-West to perpetuate themselves; since you vote large sums of money every year to protect them, to educate them, to civilize them, if possible, all that in acknowledgment of their natural right to live and die in the land where they have seen the light of day, in the name of what morals, of what

principles can you deny the same undoubted privileges to the French-Canadians? A barbarian from the darkest corner of Africa is protected and at liberty the very moment he has his foot on the free soil of the British Empire, if he swears allegiance to the Crown, if he obeys the laws of the land, if he qualifies himself to fulfil the responsible duties of a citizen. Why should not a French-Canadian be so respected and kindly welcomed anywhere under the sun?

Now, let us go for a moment beyond the limits of the British Empire, and what do we find? Not only duality, but diversity of languages and nationalities exist in nearly all the most powerful countries in the world. Look at the great German Empire, and its numerous groups, at the Austrian Empire, with its two great national divisions, at Sweden and Norway, united under the same king, but each of these two countries having its own Government, its own constitution, its own code of laws. Return to our own continent, and throw a glance over the boundary line. Do you not hear divers languages freely spoken over the broad extent of the American Republic. Do you not see numerous national groups, many of them yearly increasing in large proportions, the Yankee, the English, the Scotch, the Irish, the Italians, the Austrians, the Russians, the French, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Danes, the Germans; the latter alone actually numbering perhaps more than fifteen millions, a whole people by themselves, speaking their own



mother tongue, having daily their own national papers edited in German and circulated by millions.

If the different national groups, for such they really are, of the once separated States of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Wurttemberg, Baden, Hesse, etc., could, without being charged with attempting an insane project, unite together under their constitution of 1871, to organize one of the great ruling Powers of our times; if Swedes and Norwegians can, without being considered desperately insane, perpetuate their nationalities under the same Royal authority; if Austrians and Hungarians can, without for so doing, run the danger of being all confined in insane asylums, live happy and contented under the rule of the same Emperor, enjoying their respective constitutional privileges,—the first charter of Hungary, called by the historic name of “Bulla Aurea,” granted by King Andrew II., dating as far back as 1222—if nearly all the European nationalities can be represented by their descendants under the flag of the United States; can you possibly give me the shadow of a sensible reason why the same glorious political phenomenon could not be perpetuated in Canada?


Do you know of a small Island called Jersey, a very loyal country not far off from England, governed by Our Most Gracious Queen, where the French language is yet the national tongue of the population?

Sir, are we to understand that you undertake the great work to realize unity of race, of language and of

creed in the British Empire? Let me tell you that you are beginning many centuries too late, and that you cannot possibly live long enough to even see the very distant dawn of the success of your political scheme. You had better believe me, it is altogether a chimerical idea, a preposterous plan.

If you were called upon to occupy the honorable position of Prime Minister of Canada, would you adopt the emigration policy that no man from Europe, or elsewhere, would be allowed to become a loyal British subject, and a true Canadian at heart, if he would not bind himself to give up his native tongue, his religious creed, and to alter, I cannot understand by what miraculous means, the blood that runs in his veins?

Sir, you have added insult to cruelty in speaking at Toronto of my French compatriots. It was unworthy of your intelligence and unworthy of your standing as a public man, to scornfully sneer at them about what you called with derision the "prosperous ways of the Province of Quebec, its advancing intelligence, all those things which add such brightness and glory to the Canadian scene." What have they done to deserve such treatment at your hands? If your heart and mind were not now closed to all fairness by prejudice, you would admit that the fact that the sixty thousand French-Canadians living a few years more than a century ago, have increased to a million and a half in Canada alone; that their children of successive generations have settled the many millions of acres of




land of which they are the owners, have engaged by thousands, and with success, in professional, commercial and industrial pursuits, that they have produced political leaders of talent, of great intelligence, of masterly eloquence, that they have always been loyal and law-abiding, is greatly to the credit of my compatriots. You would concur in the opinion of all right-thinking and high-minded men, that, for what they have accomplished, in spite of all the difficulties they had to contend with, they are entitled to the consideration and the friendly esteem of all their countrymen, of whatever race and creed they may be.

I will speak my mind openly to the last word of these letters, as I have done all my life in discussing public matters. Sir, do not conclude, from all I have said in my criticism of your speech, that I have the least apprehension for the future of my French-Canadian countrymen, in consequence of your new departure. I am sure that if I had, I would be most unfair to my intelligent and patriotic countrymen of the great Province of Ontario. I know them well enough to be convinced, to the very bottom of my heart, that they will not be carried away by your appeals to prejudices and fanaticism. They will calmly listen to your arguments, they will weigh them in the balance of justice and of fair play, and from Sarnia to the eastern limit of the fair land of Ontario, blessed with so many gifts of Him who is the Creator of all nationalities and languages on earth, you will find very few to join with you for the purpose of depriving my French

compatriots of all their constitutional rights. If you persist in that very bad course, you will soon be left alone and given plenty of time to repent having ruined the bright political prospects which once were yours.

I feel confident that my French-Canadian compatriots will not vainly appeal to the fairness and the kind feelings of the electors of Ontario, and of all the other Provinces of the Dominion. From British Columbia to Prince Edward Island, a powerful wave of popular opinion will easily check the under currents of creed and racial prejudices, vainly stirred up by disappointed ambition, unworthy motives, and dangerous aspirations. Our dear country will be spared the years of religious and national strife it is your purpose to create and foment.

In thus addressing you in a fair and courteous criticism of your speech in Toronto, it was my duty to avenge the great statesman Canada lost two years ago. I must positively affirm that in so doing I was animated not by a particle of partisan feeling, but by a profound sense of justice to his memory. Sir John Macdonald's fame as a powerful, high-minded leader of men, wonderfully skilled in the art of government, as a true and sincere patriot, is a national property, a national honor and glory, which opponents and partisans alike will defend and protect against the aspersions of unjust reproaches and of erroneous judgments, wilfully or not, passed on the motives and the principles which inspired him through his very long, but still far too short, political career. Like any of us, he had his faults, for



he was human. But, in his active frame, the heart was good, ever generous, naturally kind, the mind was large, the intelligence reached that high degree which is called genius, the soul was all devotedness and patriotism. His most cherished dream was the prosperity and the grandeur of his dear Canada. To that object, to that end, he has given his whole life. For nearly half a century he has battled for justice and fair play to all, for a true and genuine policy of Equal Rights. A British subject he was born, a British subject he died, as he had, a few weeks previous, publicly expressed the hope he would, when he was on the very threshold of eternity. Let him rest in peace and, though gone for ever, enjoy the gratitude of his countrymen, to whom he has given the whole resources of his superior talents. If you are losing faith in the future of your country, go to his grave and, in the midst of the solemn tranquility which makes the surroundings so serene and so impressive, meditate upon the important duties and the great responsibility of a public man, listen to his patriotic inspirations, learn to follow his noble examples. You will return from this pious pilgrimage heartened, a better man, a more generous political leader, a truer friend of a sound policy of "Equal Rights."

Only a very few days after the publication of this, my last open letter to you, and all the loyal British subjects will unite to celebrate the anniversary which causes so many rejoicings all over the Queen's Dominions. I will be allowed to conclude by repeating

what, at a critical period in our history, I said from my seat in the Legislative Assembly of this Province. When next week, on the glorious twenty-fourth of May, from all parts of her vast Empire, the sound of a magnificent concert of expressions of loyalty will reach the foot of the throne, let us send to Her Majesty the cheering news that peace, harmony and happiness are still reigning supreme in Canada. Let us unite in the invocation, that long may she live; long may she be happy and glorious; long may she enjoy the tender affection of her noble children and the felicity of her royal home; long may she occupy the magnificent throne which, for more than half a century, she has adorned with all the virtues of a great Queen, an affectionate mother, and a most distinguished woman; long may she witness the prosperity of her mighty Empire; long may she rejoice at the new triumphs of CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY in her broad Dominions; long may she have the respect, the esteem, the veneration of her devoted, loyal and ever grateful subjects!

And, in the name of them all, I can say that of the hundreds of millions of British subjects, none will join more heartily than the French-Canadians in that sincere invocation.

Please believe me always with personal regard,

Yours very sincerely,

L. G. DESJARDINS,

Late M. P. for L'Islet.

Quebec, May 17, 1893.

